

Under Cover

by silversurfer60

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Summary: Rose Tyler, who is attached to the Broadchurch police gets her first real assignment with Alec Hardy, whom she had been trying to avoid since she got there. They both have to set aside their differences and pose as a couple when their boss puts them on local prestige housing estate when suspected terrorists move in. Will they get on or will Alec want a 'Divorce' when it's over? AU.

1. Chapter 1

****Based loosely on an episode of NCIS: Los Angeles where Kensi and Deeks go under cover, Rose has never met the Doctor and becomes a young plain clothes policewoman and has recently been given a promotion to detective constable and sent to work in Broadchurch. Takes place just after the Latimer case. I have just moved this to Broadchurch/Doctor Who crossovers but since it has no other major characters apart from Rose in it, it has nothing to do with Doctor Who. Sorry but wherever I post it, someone will probably complain! You just can't please everyone so I if you expect references to the Doctor in it, there aren't any.**
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~~~~{ silversurfer60 }~~~~

Rose Tyler was sat in the squad room of the Broadchurch police station, waiting for something exciting to happen. She had been in Broadchurch less than a week and there was no senior DS or a DI, well not that you could count the part-time sickly DI as actually being in charge. From what she had been told, he'd just solved a major case of a young boy's murder that she'd been following back in the north London station she'd just been transferred from.

She should be grateful her request for a DC's job had been taken seriously and she'd had to move at short notice over the last weekend when on the Friday before, her boss had called her into his

office.

"Tyler, you still want that DC's job?"

"Yes Sir, has one come up?"

"You could say that. How soon can you pack?"

"It's not in London then?"

"What do you think Tyler? Remember that murder case that was finally solved a few days ago?"

"Which one was that?"

"The one in the Dorset seaside town, Broadchurch where it was the husband of a DS."

"Oh yeah, me and my mum were following that. Wasn't the DI taken ill?"

"He's on sick leave but since the DS in question is also on leave, he's back on a desk job from Monday. So, do you want it or not?"

"Has anyone turned it down?"

The DI shook his head. From what he knew about Alec Hardy, Tyler wouldn't last five minutes, not even making his tea.

"I'll be honest with you Tyler, I offered it to DC Bryson but his girlfriend's pregnant and he doesn't want to move now."

"Right. So when do I start?" she'd asked, hoping she'd get some time to make the move.

"Monday. Someone from personnel will book you into a B&B down there and since it's short notice, Broadchurch have agreed they will pay the costs for two weeks, until you can sort something out, then you'll get an allowance for being away from home. Go see Sandra before you leave, she'll give you the details and arrange for your train ticket, just tell her when you'll be going, you'd be best going on Sunday when it's quiet."

"Do they even have a train station in Broadchurch?"

"I've been told it's in the town itself, the police station is down by the harbour. Good luck Tyler and don't think we're trying to get rid of you, you deserve this promotion so make the most of it."

"Thank you sir, I will. I expect it will be quiet now the fuss is over?"

"From what I'm told, the boy's funeral is today, the press will have left by Monday and that DI won't give you any trouble, he's got a bad heart."

Rose had smiled to herself as her boss told her to pack her things into a storage box and after seeing Sandra in personnel, take the

rest of the day off. Rose had said she was going to need it " to explain to her mother she was going away. After saying goodbye to the few people who actually talked to her, she had gone home to break the news to Jackie Tyler.

"Hi Mum, guess what?" Rose had asked as she put the box on the kitchen table, her mother staring at her.

"You got fired?"

"Nope, I got my promotion but it's not in London."

"Then where the hell are they sending you?"

"Remember that case we were following of that young boy?"

"Oh yeah, poor kid and it being a family friend, isn't it always a family friend?"

"I suppose a lot of them are known to the victims, I feel sorry for the wife of the killer, how is she gonna cope?"

"You'll be able to find out if they're sending you there."

"She's been put on leave until it dies down, she's got two young boys, one was the dead boy's best friend."

"So what happened to that other detective, the one who nearly died?"

"I wouldn't believe everything you read in The Herald Mum, that Karen White had a real go at him early in the investigation, remember?"

"So you didn't agree with her?"

Rose smiled " Karen White had not met half the detectives where she had just been working who could easily oust Alec Hardy from that elite title of being the worse cop in Britain. So Rose had packed what she could into a suitcase and a large holdall, Sandra had given her the address of the B&B down by the harbour and she was collecting her ticket at Waterloo Station on Sunday morning so she could have the rest of Sunday to settle in before reporting to her new chief superintendent on Monday morning.

She'd managed to take a quick look around the harbour on the Sunday afternoon, hoping she might bump in her new immediate boss and introduce herself but there had been no sign of him or DS Miller, whom she would have liked to have met. On Monday morning, her initial meeting with CS Jenkinson had gone reasonably well.

"Ah, DC Tyler, welcome to Broadchurch. I trust you are settling in?"

"Yes Ma'am, thank you. It seemed fairly quiet yesterday when I arrived."

"The reporters have finally left town, well most of them, we still have the local one who is related to the DS whose place you will be taking while she is on leave."

"Oh, is the position not a permanent one? I was not told that."

"No, it's permanent, you will be partnering with DI Hardy, he's back today though he should be on sick leave until he gets himself fixed. He stayed for the boy's funeral last Friday and since he still is in the hotel we put him up in, the chief constable decided we may as well put him to work rather than get another full time DI from another area."

"When you say partner, do you mean I go with him if he has to go out? I was led to believe he was on desk duty."

"Well he's supposed to be but if anything comes up, he'll have to attend if the other DS's can't handle it, I understand you can drive?"

"Yes Ma'am, I passed my police driving test but I don't have my own car."

"Well you can get one if Hardy needs to go anywhere but he's only allowed to work four hours a day, from ten until two. When he arrives, just let him know he needs to see you if he has to go out and don't let him have you making his tea all day either."

Rose had smiled. "No Ma'am, I'll make that clear to him but if he tells me that's what I'm here for, I'll refer him to you."

"Yes DC Tyler, you do that and congratulations on your promotion, which is now official. Just go see personnel when you find somewhere permanent to live, if you've not found anything in two weeks, we will pay your maximum housing allowance and you'll have to pay the rest if you stay at the boarding house."

Rose had made her way to the CID squad room on the first floor and found the desk with DS Miller's name on, which she'd been told to take since it was the nearest one to Alec Hardy's office and having taken off the name plate, had got a few stares.

"I'm DC Rose Tyler and I'm filling in for DS Miller until she comes back or she's replaced. Any questions?"

Everyone had shaken their heads and gone back to work until a woman had come up and stood beside her desk as she was arranging her things.

"Hi Rose, I'm DC Francine Booth, welcome to the lion's den. Hardy's back this morning, watch out for him though."

"So I've been told, nice to meet you. Does everyone go by their titles here?"

"We all use first names, well except for a few but Hardy will probably call you 'Hey, you' like he does everyone else, he's hopeless at names. He worked with Ellie Miller all that time and he still called her Miller. So where have you come from?"

"North London, I've just been promoted and no-one else wanted the job since it's so far away. What's the mood like here, now it's all dying down?"

"Recovering from the aftershock. Watch out, here he comes."

Alec Hardy had just walked in, without clutching the door or stumbling over. He'd been on his new medication since his last incident and warned by his CS he'd better take it or he'd find himself over at the academy teaching new recruits. He'd been summoned to her office last Friday afternoon and offered his job back at reduced hours. The conversation hadn't gone well.

"So Alec, do you accept coming back for four hours a day?" he'd been asked.

"I suppose so, if that's the best I'm going to get offered. Have you heard from Miller?"

"No, did she go to the funeral?"

"No but Tom was there, he was very upset, he was with his aunt and cousin. I just came from the Latimer house, they are lighting a bonfire on the beach tonight as a memorial to Danny but I don't intend being there. Your call came as a surprise."

He had been at the wake and had just escaped Karen White when he'd got the call to go see her.

"Well you can come back but someone is going to have to work closely with you."

"Not Frank or Pete Lawson?"

"No, someone new, I've not got all the details yet but it's a newly promoted DC by the name of Tyler, from north London."

"Great Elaine, I have to break in a new DC. He'd better be worth training. How long for?"

"Until it's decided if DS Miller keeps her rank or if she's transferred elsewhere, I've been told she doesn't want to move back to the family home."

"Is that so surprising? So, what about this new DC?"

"I'll let you meet DC Tyler on Monday. Are you staying in the hotel for now? You are going to have to pay towards it next week, we can apply your housing allowance towards it. There's always the guest house nearby, we're putting DC Tyler up there for now."

"What has that to do with me, am I suppose to seek out his company?"

Elaine was dying to tell him DC Tyler was young, single and blonde but she didn't want to spoil the surprise. He had just assumed he was getting a male partner, so let him think that until he met her. If he found out he was getting another female partner, he might well ask for a teaching job.

Alec had left her office and was surprised to get a call from Ellie Miller.

"Not left town then?" Ellie asked him.

"I stayed for the funeral, it was the right thing to do."

"Can we meet up later?"

"If you want to talk but not at my hotel."

"Feeling paranoid? Ok, on the pier after dark. Tom said they're lighting a bonfire for Danny on the beach, I can get Lucy to watch Fred."

They had met up and Alec was about to tell her it was all over for him, he was going to turn down the offer to go back to work.

"Where will you go?" he'd asked her.

"Somewhere else, give the boys a fresh start though Tom's hardly spoken to me since it happened, he's spending a lot of time with Olly. What about you?"

"It's all over, I'm done."

"Look at us, the former detectives club. Is that how they thank us, kicking us out like that?"

"Well I did not want to appear to be rubbing it in your face but I got offered four hours a day sitting at my old desk. It seems the chief constable is reluctant to set someone else on."

"Well at least you won't be chasing any suspects down a hill."

"No, my new partner is meant to be keep me chained to my desk or go out with me, to keep me out of trouble should I be called to something no-one else can handle."

"Who got the short straw? Frank?"

"No, a newcomer from London, name of Tyler."

"Male or female?"

"No idea Miller, I'll give whoever it is a week, they've just been promoted to DC."

Ellie had to laugh. He hadn't been able to put up with her, let alone a newly promoted DC. She just hoped whoever it was could put up with him until he left permanently or got himself fixed.

So as Alec had walked into the squad room on the Monday morning, he'd stopped at Rose's desk and had asked who she was and what she was doing sitting at DS Miller's desk.

"So who are you then? Are you meant to be sitting there?"

"This was the desk I was told to take."

"Where is this DC Tyler then, isn't he meant to have that desk, I was not told anyone else was starting today. No, wait, you are DC Tyler?"

Rose wanted to say something witty back but didn't want to risk it. All week it had gone downhill from there, they had been out twice to what he had called a complete waste of time and not worthy of his presence, complained about her driving, that it was worse than Miller's and made her fetch his tea three times when he couldn't be bothered getting up and had shouted for her through his office door, which he'd been ordered to leave open.

She was glad it was Friday, she had the weekend off thankfully and she intended looking around the shops and in the rental agency to see if she could find somewhere covered by her housing allowance though she somehow doubted it. She had heard Hardy's desk phone ringing but since he mumbled so much all she had heard was a "I will be there shortly" and he made her jump as he stood by her desk.

"Tyler, you're with me, come on."

Thinking they were going out again, Rose was about to have a car made available for them and was reaching for her desk phone.

"Leave it, we are going to see the chief."

Rose thought that was it, he'd already had enough of her insinuations he was a lousy boss and had been cheeky to him several times while they'd been out when he'd complained she stopped at a garage to get a sandwich and never offered to get him anything, then she'd ended up sharing it with him, rather reluctantly and offering him half the bottle of strawberry flavoured water to wash it down.

She had also mumbled back at him how ungrateful he was by never saying thank you for saving him from being hungry and reminding him he was supposed to take his pills, which the CS had told her he was supposed to take with or after food three times a day and she wasn't going to stick around and make sure he took his other two in the mornings and evenings, she was only responsible if she was out at lunchtime with him or saw him bring something back to eat in his office.

She followed him out into the corridor and he headed for the stairs.

"You're not supposed to take the stairs Sir."

"Quit going on Tyler, you are worse than Miller and my ex wife put together."

"So what did the CS want?"

"How do I know Tyler? I was just told to bring you to her office with me."

She followed him downstairs and along the corridor to Jenkinson's office where Alec knocked on the door and was told to enter.

"Ah, DC Tyler, DI Hardy, I have a special assignment for the pair of you."

"Together?" they both asked at once.

Elaine smiled. "Yes, together. I want you both to pose as a couple and go stay in one of the new houses just outside town. We have had several complaints about a foreign national couple having visitors at all hours and the chief constable wants it checking out. He wants to assure the other residents they are not a terrorist group plotting to blow up the town."

Alec pulled on his tie, unfastening yet another shirt button Rose noticed and if he wasn't such a jerk and her boss she could have fancied him, bad heart or no bad heart but she knew he was off limits.

"Is there no-one else?" Alec finally asked.

"Not up to the challenge DI Hardy?" Elaine asked him, seeing he was uncomfortable.

"I can do the job fine but Tyler here has little or no experience at undercover operations."

"Do I get a choice in this?" Rose dared to ask.

All she got was a "No" from Jenkinson and a "Does it have to be her?" from Alec.

## 2. Chapter 2

Rose took the seat that the chief indicated and Alec reluctantly sat beside her as the chief explained what was going on.

"As you may be aware Alec, there is a new housing development just outside town, most of the houses are now occupied, a few have been bought by investors as holiday homes. Recently, we have had complaints about a couple who have moved into one of the houses, that they have visitors coming and going at all hours, cars parked at odd times and never seen again and people standing around then meeting up with someone and going inside."

"Has that become a crime suddenly?" Alec wanted to know.

"Not in itself but in the times we live in, we can never be sure of what is going on. It came to the chief constable's attention when Ellie Miller's nephew picked up on it and posted it on the newspaper's social media account."

"Bloody Twitter," Alec mumbled, making Rose smile.

"Yes, well we know what happened the last time," Elaine commented.

Rose didn't know though, since she'd not been around then. "What happened the last time then?"

"I'm sure DI Hardy can fill you in. I want the two of you to move into one of the two bedroom properties that are being used for holiday homes. I've pulled a few strings to get one opposite where the shall I say suspicious activity has been taking place. You will pose as a newly engaged couple using the house until you find somewhere more permanent, everyone knows DI Hardy from the newspapers



and TV so the cover story will be that you Rose have just come down from London to join him."

"How the hell am I going to explain having a girlfriend, let alone a fiancée?" Alec demanded to know, looking across at Rose who herself wasn't keen on the idea.

"That's up to you two but it should only be in front of the other residents, some of them will only be newly moved in themselves. You can both carry on working, Rose, you'll have to work the hours he does and you can keep a car for a week, pick one up in the morning. I'll let the two of you make the rest of the arrangements and Rose, go see Neil in surveillance, he'll have a laptop for you and a separate webcam, which you need to place in the window somehow and he'll show you how to review it, you'll need to keep it going 24 hrs a day so you don't have to constantly watch out of the window."

"So, we just act normally, like going in and out?" Rose asked.

Alec just raised his eyebrows, wanting it to be over before it even started.

"What do you think Tyler?"

Elaine smiled and wished she was going with them, it could be quite entertaining.

"Rose, your room at the B&B will be kept for you while you're away as will yours Alec, it will make no difference as to you both finding somewhere more long term, just extend the time you have by another week."

"We both have to stay there?" Alec asked, hoping he could sneak off back to the hotel after dark.

"Yes, you have to make it look good, you're supposed to be engaged, how would it seem if you went off at all hours?" Elaine asked him.

"I could say I am on night duty," Alec quipped back.

"You're supposed to be on sick leave, remember? That's why your cover is Rose has been staying in London because of the Latimer case and now it's over has come to join you. As I said, you'll have to make the rest of it up as you go along."

"Do we have to be engaged?" Rose wanted to know.

"Well it would look better but no, you could say you're his long-term girlfriend and you're thinking of getting married, that should cover it."

Rose was just as relieved as Alec was.

"Any questions?" the chief asked, looking at both of them and how hot and bothered Alec looked.

"Yes, does it have to be a week?"

"Yes Alec, you're supposed to have rented the house because Rose

didn't want to stay in a hotel with you. No-one has seen her around town much yet but if they have, you'll just have to say she has just been transferred so you can be together."

Alec thought this was getting more complicated by the minute, how was he supposed to make something up like having a girlfriend? Still, it could be worse he thought, she could be supposedly pregnant. Just let her try that one.

"Is there anything else?" Alec asked as he stood up.

"No, I just need a few words with DC Tyler, since this as you pointed out is her first undercover assignment."

"You think I am not capable of doing that? If you are going to talk about me, then I will leave."

"I just need to make her aware of certain things, what's expected of her and that ultimately, any decisions that need to be made regarding what goes on with the surveillance will be down to you and as for when you are both in the house, well that may be up for debate."

Alec got up and thought he knew he was going to take charge whether Tyler wanted it or not. Elaine waited until he had left.

"I'll be honest with you Rose, I had my doubts about putting you with him on such a task. I need to fill you in about his medical condition. You know he has a bad heart and shouldn't even be working?"

Rose nodded. "Yes, you told me to make sure he took his medication when I was working with him. I suppose now I'm responsible for him for the next week at all times?"

"Yes, I know it's a lot to ask of you, I didn't think any of the other female officers would be able to cope with him, they worked the Latimer case with him and most of them are known around town, it would have been a lot harder to explain than you both moving into a rented house."

"I understand Ma'am, some of them tried to warn me about him on my first day but he's not that bad. He's not as much hard work as my ex boyfriend."

"You only see him for four hours a day â€" wait until it's 24 hours a day. From now on, I'm making you responsible for his well-being, you have to keep him calm, make sure he takes his medication above all else and don't let him get the better of you. I'd refer you to Ellie Miller but she's already left town and she's not answering my calls, which I can't really blame her for."

"I would have like to have met her, she knows more about him than anyone else I expect. I'll just have to make do. Where can I find the surveillance team?"

After Elaine filled her in on a few more things, Rose went off to be briefed about using the equipment to save time in the morning. She had been told someone from the rental agency would drop the keys to the house off later that afternoon and leave them at the front desk

and had been told not to say why and that they were for Rose. Elaine had said no sense in anyone from the station knowing why Rose would be leaving with him every day from Monday.

Rose caught Alec when she got back and closed his office door.

"What is it Tyler?"

"We should make arrangements Sir, for tomorrow."

"Just give me the address, I will get a taxi and meet you there."

"If you don't mind me pointing out Sir, we should arrive together, we're supposed to be moving in together. We have to make it look good the chief said."

"So she did but you do not have to take that literally Tyler. Very well then, do you know where The Traders Hotel is?"

"We passed it a few times. I pick a car up in the morning and I'll collect the laptop at the same time then when I've collected my stuff, I'll call for you."

"Make it around eleven and if you need to go get groceries, you can go when you have dropped me off."

"Suits me but you'll have to tell me what you want fetching back."

He knew he was doomed before they had even started. He left just before two, Rose had been out and brought him back a sandwich and he'd taken his pills in front of her. Before he left the office though, he called her to the break area.

"Don't you go telling everyone."

"Why would I do that?"

"Because I know how you women like to gossip. Next week when I leave, you'll have to make excuses, tell them you have to see I get back to the hotel or something."

"I'll see what I can do. Shall I ring you when I'm setting off to pick you up?"

"No, I will be outside at eleven, no need to call. Let's get one thing straight Tyler, this was not my idea."

"I know that. I'll see you in the morning then."

She went back to her desk, wishing she had someone to talk to, how was she going to cope with him for a week? She was about to leave for the weekend when DC Booth stopped beside her desk.

"Hey Rose, some of us are going around to the pub, want to come with us? You need to get to know us."

"Oh, I'd really like to but I've got lots to do, I've got to start looking for another place to stay."

"At night?"

"Yeah, I was gonna go somewhere with free internet again and see if anything new has come in, otherwise I've got to stay where I am for now."

"Suit yourself but you might want to know the others have been talking about you."

"So?"

"Thought you'd want to defend yourself?" Francine asked her, watching as the others went past.

"Come on Francine, leave her, she's obviously trying to impress grumpy arse," one of the other women called.

"Don't be so rude, he's your boss."

"See, told you," another one of them said.

"You do know he almost died bringing in Danny's killer? Have a little more respect will ya?"

She got up, ignoring them. "Say what you like about him but don't expect me to join in your gossip, if he asks me if you talk about him I'm not gonna lie for you."

With that, she picked her shoulder bag up and her jacket and walked off, hoping they wouldn't see her collecting the keys for the rented house. She had a good mind now to make sure they saw her out with him, it would give them something more to talk about. She got downstairs and walked up to the desk, the other women just going out.

The desk sergeant noticed.

"Settling in DC Tyler?"

"Something like that. Have some keys been left for me?"

He went in the desk drawer and brought out two sets of keys.

"There you go, you need to sign for them. Got a place to rent have you?"

More like he was trying to find out if she had someone renting with her.

"Just for a while, see if I like it. Don't know why they left two lots of keys."

"No boyfriend joining you then?" the sergeant smiled.

Rose just smiled back and walked out onto the plaza and looked across the road at the catering area and thought she spotted Ellie Miller with a young boy. She had seen the DS in the papers though it wasn't about her husband, Joe Miller's name had not been released to the general public but there was no doubt in Rose's mind that the town

already knew. She walked across the road and approached Ellie, who was trying to get her son to have a drink.

"Hello, I'm DC Rose Tyler, I just transferred here. You're Ellie Miller, right?"

Ellie looked up. "You must be the only person here who wants to talk to me or have you not heard?"

"Yeah and I'm really sorry to bother you, I just wanted to introduce myself."

"Well now you have. I'm not staying in town, I've just got a flat to rent where I'm transferring to so don't think you've made a friend."

"Well I'm not replacing you, well I've not been told I am, I just got stuck being DI Hardy's partner, to keep him out of trouble."

Ellie let out a laugh. "Am I supposed to feel sorry for you? Good luck with him and the others, when they find out."

"They already have, I just made a few enemies, not that I'd want them as friends. What's your son's name?"

"It's Fred though don't think you can bribe him, he's been like this all day. He misses his dad."

"I know all about that, mine died when I was a baby."

"Are you sure about that? I don't know what I'm going to tell him when he gets older, my other son won't even talk to me."

"Mine got knocked down by a car, loads of people saw it happen and I'm sorry about your other son. Anyway, don't let me keep you."

"It's fine Rose but I'm not staying, I've just been to see Tom, to try and get him to move with me but he still refuses."

"Maybe you should get DI Hardy to talk to him for you?"

"Are you kidding? Tom hates him more than he hates me right now. Look Rose, I'm leaving, end of story. One thing and my whole life here is gone, only my nephew and my sister are talking to me."

Rose smiled again. "Now I'm talking to you, ask for me at the station if you ever want someone else to talk to."

"I'll think about it. Don't let me keep you."

"Yeah, I have some things to do, the chief's put me on a special assignment."

"Lucky you, what is it, playing nursemaid to Alec Hardy?" Ellie half smiled at the thought of someone trying to keep her grumpy ex boss in line.

"I can't say much but since you're leaving town and you're his old DS, the assignment is going undercover as a couple on a new housing

estate where people have reported something."

Ellie almost choked on her bottle of water, that piece of news had cheered her up.

"Alec Hardy, posing as your boyfriend? And you're sharing a house with him? Are you completely insane?"

"I'm beginning to think I am, I daren't tell anyone in the office, can you believe I just defended him in front of them?"

"Everyone used to talk about him before, they'll not change their opinion of him. Do yourself a favour Rose, don't let him get the better of you, in the office or on assignment. Have you been driving him around or is he not supposed to go out?"

"We've been out a couple of times though he said it was a waste of his time."

"He would. Well don't tell anyone else, trust me. I like you Rose, you've got the gall, give him a run for his money."

"I intend to. Nice to have met you."

"Call me Ellie, I had enough of Hardy not using my first name."

"So do you blame him for what happened?"

Ellie shook her head. "No, I blame myself for letting it happen, I should have spotted it."

"I suppose it's no good saying how were you suppose to stop it? Don't take the blame for his actions. Call me, any time but next week I only work the hours he does, the chief's making me responsible for him."

"So you're posing as his girlfriend then? I'd love to see his face."

"Yeah, you should have seen him in the chief's office when she said he had to stay there all the time and no sneaking off."

"I can imagine. Don't go easy on him will you?"

"Oh, I think I can keep him on his toes Ellie."

She said goodbye and went back to her room in the boarding house. How was she going to explain being away? She needn't have worried as the owner caught her attention on the way in.

"DC Tyler, do you have a minute? I got a call from your personnel department to ask us to keep your room while you're away. Not leaving for good are you? You just got here."

"Yeah, I have to go on a special assignment but I'll still be around. It means I can stay here an extra week, until I find a place of my own."

"Well you're welcome to stay as long as you need, we're always happy to help the police and it's been quiet around here, we've not had any

new guests since the murder, just the long-term residents who work here."

Rose excused herself and went to start packing to save time in the morning, she would have plenty to do with picking up the laptop and the car then collecting her boss. She remembered to call her mother but thought it best not to tell her about moving onto a posh housing estate with her sort of good-looking with a scruffy beard boss.

"So how's Broadchurch then?" her mother asked.

"It's ok, everyone is trying to get back to normal after what happened. I actually just bumped into that DS. You haven't told anyone who it was have you?"

"Rose Tyler, how can you ask me something like that? How long have you been in the police?"

"I'm sorry Mum, I had to check. She's really upset, her son won't talk to her and the baby is giving her trouble. Anyway, how are you?"

Half an hour later, Rose was deciding if she should just take everything with her or leave what she didn't need. At least there would be a washing machine there to do her laundry, she'd had to go to the one by the caravan site and she'd learned it would be closing soon when the camp closed and she didn't know where there was another one, she'd probably have to go out of town or pay extra for a private laundry.

When Alec had left work earlier, he'd bumped into Becca on his way in. Now was as good a time as any to explain his absence for the next seven days.

"Hi sunshine, back already?" Becca had asked him as she got his key.

"Lucky guess. I need to let you know I'll be away for the next week, keep my room though will you?"

"I already know, the station rang earlier to tell me. The press just left town so we don't exactly need to re-book your room. Going anywhere nice?"

He considered his answer. It wasn't that DC Rose Tyler was not good looking, she was, even in her what passed for a uniform, her flat black shoes and her hair tied back, not that he'd taken much notice but she looked better with her blouse buttons open than Miller had and he'd had to resist the temptation to get her to lean over his desk. It wouldn't do his heart condition any good but there was no way he was going to admit to her or anyone else he'd been looking.

"I can't talk about it, I have a special assignment."

"Really? You said you were only doing a desk job."

"It's nothing to get excited over. Try not to miss me while I'm gone."

The next morning, Rose was up early and after she walked around to the police garage and picked up the car she had been loaned, which fortunately didn't look like it belonged to the police, she risked parking outside the boarding house and picked up her things and made her way to the hotel where Alec had been waiting outside with a suitcase and a holdall.

"You're five minutes late Tyler," he told her as she opened the back door.

"Sorry and you'd best start calling me Rose."

"I will, when we see anyone around the estate. You have the address and the keys?"

Rose went in her pocket and brought out a set of keys and handed them to him as he got in the car.

"These are yours but the chief told me I work the same hours as you so I take you to and from the station."

"Just great. I expect she told you that you are responsible for my health during the assignment?"

"Yeah so please try not to overdo things?"

"I will try not to die on you. I suppose you'll be calling me Alec? I don't like the name so I would appreciate it if you keep it to a minimum?"

"Right, gotcha. It's not far anyway, it's just past the roundabout on the main road, I think we passed the turn-off a few days ago."

He was glad she had been paying attention then. A short time later, Rose had turned into the estate and Alec was looking for the number which was 22, opposite where the suspicious activity had been reported. She pulled into the driveway as he pointed it out and she stopped under the canopy, Alec hardly waiting for her to put the car in the 'Park' position before taking off his seatbelt. Rose wondered what his hurry was.

He went to the back of the car and opened it, thinking he'd best unlock the door first and Rose smiled as she got out and followed him.

"Don't make a show of it Tyler."

"You're supposed to look happy that I've just driven down all the way from London to be with you."

"There is no-one around to impress Tyler."

He opened the door and Rose took a quick look inside then went back out to the car and took Alec's suitcase and holdall out then her own things as he came to join her.

"I can wheel my own case," he informed her, balancing the holdall on top and grabbing the handle.

Rose closed the back door and took the handle of her suitcase, unable



to balance her smaller holdall on it so she grabbed the handle and picked it up with her free hand. Alec had already gone inside and didn't look like he was coming back out.

"Alec, a little help please?"

He put his holdall on the floor and went back to the door.

"Can't you manage? Why have you got so much stuff?"

"You can talk, your suitcase is larger than mine. I hope you're not gonna be a grump for the whole week?"

"Is that in general or just with you?" he muttered as he took the suitcase handle.

Just then, the next door neighbour decided to come outside.

"Oh, hello. I thought I heard voices."

Alec just rolled his eyes "great, the neighbours were being nosy already, Tyler would probably stand there talking all day.

"Hi, yeah, we just arrived, we're renting for a week or two," Rose offered.

"Oh, is that one of the holiday homes? You're the first ones to rent one. Haven't I see you somewhere before?" she asked, looking at Alec.

Rose put the holdall down and grabbed his arm as he tried to get inside.

"Aw, don't be shy Alec, everyone in town knows who you are, you can't fool anyone."

Alec thought he could at least try.

"We should get unpacked, you have to go shopping."

"Yeah, sorry, you'll have to excuse us. I'm Rose by the way, this as you probably already know is Alec Hardy, my boyfriend."

Alec cringed at the thought of her introducing herself to the rest of the estate, the supermarket and the rest of the town as such, if she got the chance.

"I've seen him on TV the other day. What a shame it was never revealed who killed Danny, you should make it public you know? I'm Mary, I live here with my husband and my teenage son, he went to school with Danny. When are you going to release the name?"

"I'm sure the police have to keep it quiet for the person to get a fair trial, Alec can't say anything, can you babe?"

She took hold of his free hand and with her free hand began playing with it, Alec trying his best to resist telling her to let go.

"No, I can't say anything and we really should unpack now 'honey' so if you will excuse us?"

"How long are the two of you here for?"

Alec was about to reply for as short a time as was possible but saw the look in Rose's eye.

"Just until we find somewhere permanent, I've just come down from London and this was all Alec could find at short notice, it was cheaper than the hotel and we have to get used to living together again."

Alec could feel himself getting backed into a corner. "I'm sure our neighbour has things to do Rose."

"I should let you get on then. How long have you been apart?"

Alec felt like he was being interrogated and he was an expert at it.

"Oh I stayed in London when everything kicked off, couldn't have him getting distracted all the time, could I? It wasn't easy, was it babe?"

Alec shook his head. "Come on Rose, you have to go get the groceries."

He let go of her hand and picked up the handle of the case, wishing now he'd left her to struggle.

"I'll maybe see you around then?" their neighbour asked as Rose followed him.

Alec was thinking not if he could help it. Once inside, Rose had some more news for him

"Right, I'll take the cases upstairs, one at a time then the holdalls and you can unpack while I'm out. Just pick yourself a drawer or two and which side of the wardrobe you want."

"What? There are two bedrooms Tyler."

"Yeah but I'm under orders from the chief. One, we have to make this look good and two, now I'm completely responsible for your health for the next week. What if something happens during the night?"

"We can leave the bedroom doors open, how do you think I manage at the hotel? I do not have Becca Fisher checking on me all night."

"Well she's not under orders to keep you from making yourself ill again, is she? I don't snore if that's what's worrying you?"

"No, neither do I but still, I was not expecting to share."

"Well making it look good like greeting each other going in and out, standing at the bedroom window and anywhere else we can be seen will add to the authenticity."

"You had best set up that laptop before you go out."

"Changing the subject?"

"Not at all, since you and the chief have ganged up on me but don't get any ideas Tyler."

"Stop calling me that."

"I worked with DS Miller for two months and I never used her first name."

"Were you going for some kind of record?" Rose asked, wondering how she was going to get his large suitcase upstairs.

"Here, just pull it up behind you," he suggested as he saw her debating. "Where is the laptop?"

"It's still in the car, I'll go get it."

Alec shook his head. "And don't call me 'babe' in front of the neighbours either 'honey'," he added as she picked up the car keys.

### 3. Chapter 3

After finding a suitable place to locate the webcam, Rose set the recording going on the laptop and showed Alec, him getting out his specs and nodding.

"Right, you can leave me with this, you go make a list and get the groceries, keep the receipts and claim it back."

"I'd have to buy my own if I move out of the boarding house, do you want to go halves or pay for your own?"

"I'll have whatever you are having as long as it is not pizza or anything too rich. Are you going to take over the kitchen?"

"No, you can cook whatever you like, I'll get a variety of things but you could always come with me. Let's get enough for the weekend then I can go back on Monday after work. It will look better if we both go out together."

"I don't feel like going shopping Tyler, it's my day off, I'm meant to rest. If you are not sure about something then just call me."

He hoped he wasn't setting himself up for her calling every time she turned into a new aisle.

"You can get decaf tea, I'm told it's better for me. Anything else, just whatever brands you would normally buy."

Rose set off for the nearby supermarket and tried not to bother asking him silly questions. What was wrong with him, why was he being so grumpy? She made her mind up she wasn't going to put up with his moods and get him to lighten up. She now planned to use every opportunity to get 'friendly' with him in front of the rest of the small but affluent estate.

When Rose left, Alec went into the front bedroom where Rose had left

his things " how the hell had he been persuaded to do this and then the chief and Tyler roping him into sharing a bedroom or was Tyler making it up and the chief had said no such thing? If he called Elaine and asked it could go one of two ways " she would either tell him she'd made his DC completely responsible for his health for the next week or say she knew nothing about it and Tyler was doing things her own way to ensure he survived and not only that, Elaine would think he was complying because he fancied the young blonde and this was his excuse.

The only trouble was, if the blonde wasn't several years his junior and she wasn't his DC, then he could possibly fancy her, what man in his right mind wouldn't but his friend and GP had warned him not to do anything strenuous and trying to persuade the young officer to let him attempt to have sex with her was asking the impossible. She would think he would give up on her halfway, the same as Becca Fisher had insinuated several weeks ago when he'd been either stupid or desperate enough to ask the hotel owner to spend some time with him.

Ms Fisher had quite rightly turned him down but did it mean every woman he met would do the same? It was doing nothing for his self-esteem and Tyler didn't really know him that well but they had a job to do and getting cosy for real was not part of the bargain. He would go out of his way to discourage her at least until it was all over but what then? She would have had enough of him by next Saturday morning but if she kept on calling him pet names in front of the neighbours, he would have plenty to say.

Rose didn't take that long and was soon back, she'd not had that much to choose from and had already decided she should go further afield to locate a larger supermarket after work on Monday and find one she was used to. Alec was upstairs when she got back so she struggled to take the groceries in the side door and called out she was back.

"Alec, are you ok up there?"

He hoped she wasn't going to keep on asking him that.

"I'm fine and don't worry, I've left you room for your clothes in the wardrobe," he called down.

Rose smiled to herself and putting things away, left what she had got for lunch which was two ready made egg salads and she filled the kettle and got out two plates.

"Lunch is ready," she called, seeing him at the top of the stairs.

"I didn't unpack your underwear either."

"I should hope not. If you have any laundry, bring it down, I have some to do. I got salad for lunch, ok?"

After they had eaten, Rose was reviewing the recording while she had been out, not that anything had happened but she was glad the camera just missed the car she had borrowed and hoped it didn't look too obvious in the window.

"Right, I'm off to unpack and do the laundry, why don't you lie on the sofa and watch TV or something?"

"I will, you just get on with whatever you had planned. We should maybe both go out later, to keep up appearances. Don't get any ideas though."

"Yeah, maybe I'll just drive down to the harbour and we can go have a drink, you've changed your tune."

"I never said I was opposed to going out, shopping is not my idea of going out."

"Then maybe we could go out for a few hours tomorrow, get you some fresh air. Is that all you do, go to your office and the hotel?"

"Recently? I was told to cut down so I did."

"What would you have done if you'd not been offered your job back?"

"I would have looked for something to occupy myself a few hours a day, maybe go teach at the academy over in Exeter, what harm could that do me?"

Rose smiled " she'd heard about him chasing the main suspect.

"Yeah, as long as you don't volunteer to teach gym classes or how to chase a suspect, you'd do ok."

Alec laid back on the sofa with the TV remote and fished his specs out of his shirt top pocket, trying to ignore her remarks.

"Well you will be the one doing the chasing should the need arise. I won't be asking you to revive me, I vaguely remember Miller saying something about not making her kiss me."

Rose tried not to burst out laughing. She carried on with what she was doing then went to see what Alec was watching on TV to find he had closed his eyes, the remote still in his hand. She gently took it off him and took his specs off and put them on the coffee table then got the throw she'd brought down earlier and put it over him.

She sat opposite him and giving up trying to find something to watch late on a Saturday afternoon, tuned it to her favourite radio station that she liked listening to with all the old songs. He was still asleep at six so she went to have a quick look at the webcam recording after she put a tuna and pasta bake in the oven.

Forty minutes later, it was all ready and she went to wake him up.

"Come on sunshine, wake up, your tea is ready and you need to take your pills," she told him, touching his shoulder so as not to give him a scare, him being in strange surroundings and not used to her being there.

He opened one eye, seeing Rose smiling at him " had something

happened to him when he'd fallen asleep? Then he realised who it was and what she was doing there and that he wasn't in his hotel room with Becca Fisher saying she'd changed her mind about spending some time with him nor had he woken up thinking he was drowning all over again.

Rose picked up the glass of water she'd brought in and handed him the strip of pills he'd had earlier. He gripped her arm to steady himself and sat up.

"I can get them myself you know?"

"Yeah tough guy, nothing wrong with accepting a bit of help now and then."

He took the water after getting two pills out, Rose leaving him to do that part himself.

"You trust me to take them?"

"I can, can't I? Look, I'm responsible for you but you can make it easy for me, just for the next week."

"Fine, I will try to make sure you do your job. What did you make to eat?"

Rose wanted to make sure they were seen going out so instead of driving, Alec insisted they got a taxi and made a show of it pulling up outside their rented house plus he wanted to get a closer look at the house they were watching. He also wanted to show the neighbour who had greeted them earlier whom he thought was looking at him funnily, maybe she was like the housewives on the TV programme Tess used to watch.

He decided to give Rose the full works when the taxi arrived, allowing her to get in first when the driver stopped and putting his hand out for her to take once they arrived at the pub in the far corner of the harbour, almost next to the newsagents and the sea scout hut, a bit too near for Alec's liking.

He managed to survive two hours in Rose's company, her telling him a little about where she had grown up and how she'd joined the police but he was reluctant to talk about what had brought him to Broadchurch.

"I read something about you Alec, you don't have to talk about it, if you'd rather not."

"Good, maybe another time? We should be getting back."

"It's early yet or are you getting tired of drinking that stuff?"

"Non-alcoholic lager is not the best of choices, you however seem to like what you are drinking."

Rose looked at her white wine and lemonade. "Trying to make me feel guilty?"

"Nothing of the sort but if you have another one, I don't care if the

chief ordered it or not, I am not sharing with you tonight. Did she actually say I had to be supervised?"

"It's for your own good but she didn't actually order me to make sure you were ok but look at it from my point of view. If something happened to you and I didn't hear you call out, she said you'd collapsed twice before, I didn't want to take any chances."

"Look, I appreciate the sentiment but I am not going to do anything stupid to worsen my condition."

"I know but we have to be seen at the window together anyway, I promise to be on my best behaviour."

"Well don't go having any more to drink then, that's your second one. You may just change your mind if I wake up and forget who you are."

"Why do you think I was careful earlier? Come on then, let's get a taxi back, you're paying since I bought the groceries."

"Yes, about that, we should be able to claim an allowance for living costs, we are on an assignment."

"We're getting the house paid for, we get an extra week to find somewhere to live."

"Don't you like where you are? At least you are nearer to the station than I am."

He didn't want to say that the chief had almost suggested he moved in there. He called another cab, meaning to get a receipt to claim back the cost. When they arrived back, he made another show of helping Rose out of the cab, Rose making the most of it and clinging hold of him but once they got to the door, she upped the stakes, grabbing him around the shoulders from behind and pretending to kiss his cheek.

"Come on Alec, hurry up and open the door, we have a lot of time to make up for."

Alec just rolled his eyes as he turned the key and opened the door.

"Wait until the door is closed 'honey'."

"Mmm, shy suddenly babe?"

He closed the door and tried to prise her arms from around his neck as she had followed him in like that.

"You can cut the act for now, no-one can see you."

"Well, you said we should make it look good."

"It's almost ten, no-one will be watching Tyler."

"Stop calling me that, I'd rather be called 'honey'," Rose huffed, going off to check the recording. "Hey, come and take a look at this," she called.

He took his jacket off and squinted at the screen.

"I hope it did not record you with your arms around my neck and trying to kiss me."

"I only got your cheek, I wasn't trying hard enough. No, look, a car stopped outside that house and the man's messing about with a phone or something."

She fast-forwarded it slightly and ten minutes had passed before the car moved off. She remembered how to capture that part and went back to the live feed, the webcam was able to pick up images even in low light.

"Leave it for now, I'm off to get ready for bed before you go hogging the bathroom. If you are staying up to watch TV, don't go waking me up."

"I'll try not to and I was going to suggest you used the bathroom first. I hope you wear pyjamas?"

"Very amusing 'honey'. I will open the bedroom curtains in the morning for the benefit of those who care to be watching."

"Ok but to make it look good, I might just join you."

"As long as you miss my cheek again. Goodnight then."

"I'm just gonna make some cocoa, want some?"

"If you are not going to take long, I will come back down then, in my pyjamas which I'll have you know I had to go out and buy yesterday."

Rose giggled, thinking she could wind him up a bit. "You didn't have to buy new ones on my account."

"For your information, I would never dream of sharing a house, let alone a bedroom with someone I work with sleeping in just my shorts."

"You don't normally wear anything but your shorts?"

She could see he was getting a bit embarrassed.

"Stop it Tyler."

She went into the kitchen to suppress another giggle. Alec went upstairs and into the bathroom before deciding he'd go back down dressed rather than amuse his new house-mate. How was he going to cope with her for a full week? How was he going to cope with her at night, at least they would be at work a few hours a day, that was something but she wanted to go out tomorrow, goodness knows what she had planned.

He joined her in the lounge, Rose just having the radio on this time, not on the TV, his drink on the coffee table. She smiled at him as she curled up in the chair.



"Drink it while it's still hot. Are you tired?"

"I was told I would feel more tired, I had a really bad attack not long ago. Miller accused me of dying on her."

"Now you know why I'm taking this so seriously, the chief told me. Alec, why haven't you done anything about it since then? You could have stayed off a few more weeks and got the surgery you need."

"Are you going to give me a lecture every night?" he asked, pulling the skin of the milk to one side with his spoon.

"If I have to. What about your family? How do you think they would feel if you had the chance to do something and you let yourself get worse?"

"My daughter does not talk to me and my ex wife only calls when she or my daughter wants something. I was in the papers over what happened, they know."

He was reluctant to add Tess had called but only because he'd had a very narrow escape plus he'd kept her name out when it had been discovered by the local reporter that he'd not been to blame for his last failed case.

He looked across at her and put his mug down.

"I expect you will keep on at me?"

"If it talks some sense into you? What did the hospital tell you?"

"I discharged myself before they could."

"That was a bit stupid of you. No wonder you got kicked out of your job."

"I was two days at the most away from finding the killer, I knew who it was, I just needed the proof."

"Yeah and you got it but it almost killed ya. How'd ya think the family of the boy would have felt?"

"They would not have been bothered."

"How can you even say that?"

"I'm going to bed, goodnight again."

"Yeah, night, I won't wake you. Anything I need to know?"

"Such as?"

"Like if you have an attack, do you need extra pills?"

"If I do, just give me one extra and if I don't come round, call for an ambulance but I've not had one since I stopped working the Latimer case."

"Good, I hope it stays that way, you'll have to tell me the slightest

thing that might set you off and what to do."

"I'll be sure to give you the details but not now and keep to your side of the bed."

Rose smiled as he got up. "I'll just wash the mugs then I'll be up. Don't worry, I'll get changed in the bathroom."

He was about to say he wouldn't mind the experience of watching her get undressed but thought he would earn himself a slap for even suggesting such a thing. Still, he didn't want to set himself up deliberately for another attack. As Rose got into bed as quietly as she could, she didn't like to tell him he had chosen the side she like to sleep on, when she had been at home she'd only had a single bed but she liked to sleep a certain way and it would mean she had to face him to do so. He'd be asleep though so he wouldn't know but when he woke up, he might get the wrong idea and think she didn't even trust him enough to sleep without keeping an eye on him.

He woke up early the following morning, not from the nightmare of carrying the girl out of the river but because he had the feeling someone was watching him and he was right as he opened his eyes to see Rose almost on his pillow and about an inch away from his face. He moved as slowly as he could so as not to disturb her but she felt his movement as he turned onto his back.

"Hey, morning."

"Hmm," was all she got out of him, knowing now she was awake there was no avoiding her, she would surely want to know if he felt ok.

"Before you ask, I am fine."

"Glad to hear it then, I'll go make some breakfast shall I?"

"I thought you were staying on your side of the bed?"

"Technically I am on my side. Are you going to be a grump every morning?"

He couldn't think of a reply as he got out of bed and headed for the bathroom with his clean shorts and his clothes.

Over breakfast, Rose had decided where she wanted to go so they set off for Weymouth, making a show of fussing over each other as they got into the car. Once Rose had found somewhere to park by the railway station, Alec just hoped he wasn't going to get dragged around the shops but she headed for the seafront and some gardens, seeing there was a carousel.

"No, I am not going on there."

"Aw come on, it's been ages since I went on one like this."

The ride came to a stop and people were getting off and she grabbed his hand.

"You can sit behind me if you're scared."

"I am not scared."

"Show me then."

Before he could protest, she was pulling him up the steps onto the platform, Rose making her way to the middle and choosing a horse with two seats. Alec decided since he'd no other choice he would sit at the side of her after helping her on but she grabbed him and indicated for him to sit behind.

"Not trusting me again? I'll just be here."

He got on just as the man came to collect the fares and Alec fumbled in his pocket for some change. He knew without doubt he couldn't claim this back. Later, they were walking along the sea front, Rose holding onto his arm.

"No-one can see us here Rose."

"Yeah but you never know, someone from Broadchurch might be here for the day. You called me Rose."

"No-one knows we are posing as a couple. Don't get used to this."

Rose smiled and told him not to be so grumpy again. When they got back though, Rose decided she was going to make their return look good as their next door neighbour was also getting out of her car with whom she assumed was her son.

"Oh hello again Rose, been out for the day?"

"Yeah, just down the Weymouth, didn't we Alec?" she asked, taking his hand.

She squeezed his hand then put her other one on his shoulder, going for his cheek and hitting the mark this time, not that she'd kissed a man with a scruffy beard on the cheek before, which was why she had missed on purpose the last time but Alec wasn't going to let her get away with it.

"Come on Rose, don't keep our neighbour talking love," he told her, putting his arm around her waist and kissing her cheek.

Rose just smiled and let him lead her inside, Alec soon letting go. If she didn't watch herself, she would get far more than she had bargained for.

#### 4. Chapter 4

"Don't go getting used to that."

"I thought we made a suitable impression, I saw how she looked at you when we arrived."

"Jealous already? Alec asked.

"Well since we're only here a week and we're only pretending, what difference does it actually make?"

Alec knew he'd hit a raw nerve but he didn't want to give her the wrong idea. Rose saw the look on his face that meant that's exactly what they were supposed to be doing "pretending, playing their parts for the benefit of the neighbours. If she got to the stage where she actually got jealous, he knew he would have his hands full.

"Let's get one thing straight, there is no need to get jealous, it's not like I can actually do anything about it. As for you getting the wrong idea about the whole thing, I'm here under protest and the only reason you are getting away with all this is because I was sure CS Jenkinson would tell me I have to take forced medical leave if I refused."

"Yeah, she probably would. I'm not tryin' to get away with anything, I just thought we should play our parts. Besides, what harm will it do you having someone to fuss over you for a week?"

"I don't need anyone to fuss over me."

"Tough guy, would you rather be on your own, in your hotel room with no-one to care about you?"

"I've managed so far. The hotel owner has been checking on me every night since I collapsed. She found me once before."

Rose was appalled at the way he casually mentioned it.

"When was that then?"

"Just after I arrived, I had been to the Miller house for dinner and felt unwell when I got back, I had run out of my medication."

"Geez Alec, how could you let that happen?"

"Don't give me a lecture about it, they gave me some more."

Rose shook her head and went to make some tea and found him with his feet up on the sofa, trying to squint at what the TV guide was showing.

"Can't find anything?"

He gave up and tossed the remote on the coffee table after turning the TV off.

"I'll put the radio on then?"

"Suit yourself, I'm going to have a rest, none of that new rubbish and don't play it loud."

"I don't play the 'modern' stuff, I prefer the old ones. I won't disturb you, I'll make us a light meal later."

"Fine, you do that and if you wake up on my side of the bed again in the morning, you'll know about it."

She thought she could take that either way.

"Well when we go to bed, we'll both stand at the window."

"There won't be anyone watching," Alec insisted, trying to stretch his legs out.

"We're supposed to be doing this for those opposite, there are always lights on and besides, someone may pull up in a car and see us, they won't think we're being nosy if we're otherwise occupied."

"Don't make it look too genuine then."

Rose wondered what it would be like to snog her boss, him and his scruffy beard. A few hours later, they'd had something to eat and found a programme they both wanted to watch on TV then around ten thirty, Alec said he was tired.

"You don't have to come with me."

"Well ok, I won't be long, I'll just watch the end of CSI."

"You work in the police, why do you watch these things?"

"I've always loved cop shows, especially when the lead is played by a dishy bloke."

"I take it there is one in this then?"

"Nah, not really but I like Castle."

"Who's that?"

"He's a mystery writer who helps out the NYPD, he's in love with the lead female detective, they finally got together."

"Well don't ask me to watch it. Don't wake me up."

"I didn't last night, did I?"

Half an hour later, Rose went upstairs, noting the bedroom door open and the bathroom door closed.

"Alec, are you ok in there?"

She got no answer. She banged on the door, hoping he'd not collapsed. Thankfully, the door wasn't locked.

"Alec if you don't answer me I'm coming in."

She waited a few seconds then opened the door slowly, seeing him balancing on the edge of the bath. She rushed over to him.

"What happened?" she asked, checking he hadn't bumped his head and him trying to waft her away.

"I'm fine, I just felt dizzy."

"I'm not surprised, you dashing off upstairs, you should have waited for me."

"I can't keep depending on you."

Rose held her hand out to help him up, which made him look before taking it, Rose refusing to move.

"Do you need any more pills?"

"No, just to go to bed, you can pull the curtains over on your own tonight."

"Well from now on, you don't come up on your own."

"What? Really? So I have to wait for you? Forget it."

"No, I didn't mean that, I meant I'll come up and make sure you're ok, leave the lounge door open and I can hear you coming out of the bathroom."

"I can live with that I suppose. You can let go now."

Rose let go of his arm and followed him into the bedroom, crossing to the window.

"There's another car parked across the street."

"That is what the camera is there for, leave it."

"You could come over and pretend to give me a hug."

He walked across to the window, resting his head on her shoulder then without thinking, wrapped his arms around her waist. Rose turned slightly, not expecting him to go that far and put her arms around him, kissing his cheek. He kissed hers back then nodded to the curtains.

"That was the reason you came to the window."

"I know, I'm just doing it, chill. Can I trust you to get undressed while I go to the bathroom?"

"I am not that bad. Go on, go while I get into bed."

Rose got her nightclothes and went out to the bathroom, not completely closing the bedroom door and hurriedly got changed. Now, she was really worried about him, it had just been a close call and she had almost panicked and worst of all, he didn't even seem to care that much. Now, she was determined to make him change his whole attitude towards his health situation. He was lying on his back, just his t-shirt on instead of the long-sleeved top he'd had on the previous night.

"What?" he asked as Rose got into bed, looking at him. "I have my pyjama bottoms on, in case you were worried. I was too warm in the top last night, someone was too close to me."

"I can't control where I end up when I'm asleep, can I? Just give me a nudge next time."

She got under the duvet after turning out the bedside lamp. "Back to work tomorrow then?"

"Aye, thankfully. I could not have stayed off completely for much longer."

"I'll have to get used to the shorter hours, you'll have to stop by my desk and say you want taking somewhere, just before two."

"That's a great idea, everyone will get wise to it."

"They can think what they want, I had a taste on Friday."

"What happened?"

"You don't want to know, they were just griping about you."

"They can please themselves, they must have thought they had got rid of me."

"Well in case you're interested, I stuck up for you."

"That must have made you highly popular, about as much as I am."

"I don't really care, I didn't make that many friends where I was before, I prefer to have my friends outside the police."

Alec grunted something back and turned away from her onto his side.

"Goodnight Alec, call out if you feel ill again and don't feel you have to turn away from me."

"Goodnight Rose, I'm not, I always sleep this way."

"Yeah? Is that why we were face to face this morning?"

Sure enough, when Alec woke up, he'd turned to face Rose, who had her head buried in his chest. Rose woke up suddenly, realizing what she had done but made no attempt to move.

"You don't have to make it look that good."

"Oh. Morning Alec, I'll move then shall I?"

"I don't suppose there is any rush, since we don't have to be at work until ten."

Rose moved anyway but she was still facing him. Without warning, she reached out and touched his cheek. Alec flinched slightly at first but didn't back away.

"I suppose this is just you pretending then?" he asked.

She was about to withdraw her hand but he held it in place.

"Why did your wife leave you Alec?"

"You have been checking up on me?"

"I had to know what I was getting myself into."

"She was seeing a male DS behind my back, the whole station knew,

apart from me. There is nothing else to tell, she left and took our daughter with her, we got divorced because she said I cared more about work than her and it was all my fault she went after someone else."

"Wow, well she didn't deserve you then did she? What did she expect, when you were working a case, for you just to abandon it? You both worked together, she should have known better."

"Leave it Rose, don't get involved."

He let go of her hand and turned onto his back but Rose wasn't wanting to just leave it, leaning over.

"Is that why you were so against this? Because we work together? I'm not her Alec."

"I know that but it's a bad idea, I learned my lesson the hard way."

Rose felt really sorry for him now. "It made you ill, didn't it? That and finding that girl in the river."

"Amongst other things, never knowing what happened to her cousin. Just leave it be Rose. Do you need the bathroom first?"

"No, you go ahead, leave the bedroom door open."

"Don't trust me? I am not leaving the bathroom door open."

Rose had to smile, taking his hand.

"After last night, think yourself lucky I don't make you leave the bathroom door open. Have you ever thought about what may happen if you don't do something?"

"I have to wait, just like everyone else. I have only just been referred for surgery."

"Don't you get priority, being in the police?"

"It doesn't work like that. I'll survive a little longer."

"On your own?"

"I told you, I don't need anyone."

"Well I'm here for a week so you may as well take advantage of being looked after."

"And after that? No, I can't get used to it for a few days, just treat me like you would any of your boyfriends."

"I've never lived with any boyfriends, well not properly. I had one who treated me badly, I got out as soon as I could. That's when I decided to join the police, to help other women who found themselves in the same situation."

"A very commendable thing to do. Now are you going to let me up?"



Rose hadn't realized her hand was on his chest. She was about to move it when he took hold of it, Rose thinking he was going to move it for her.

"You should get dressed and wait until I join you at the window, if you want to fool the neighbours again."

Then without warning, he raised her hand and kissed the back of it, pulling the duvet back but before he could pull his t-shirt down at the back, Rose got a good look.

"Stop watching me."

Rose smiled to herself. "Serves you right for not pulling your t-shirt down in time."

"That's all you're getting to see."

She could have sworn he muttered a 'for now' as he went to get his clothes. As she got dressed, she hoped she hadn't seemed too forward but it was too late for that. Alec on the other hand was debating just giving in and let her take on the task of keeping him out of trouble for the duration of their stay but what then?

He might get used to it and she would not want to stick around once they left, why should she? He'd already told her he had learned his lesson working with his wife, what was so different about this? He got dressed and decided he'd best be careful about turning around so fast this time, which was what had caused him to get dizzy last night and had Rose smothering him. Was it so bad though to be seen with a young blond paying him attention? Well at least she would forget it in the station since she seemed about as popular there as he was.

Rose was waiting for him to come out of the bathroom and heard the door opening.

"Why don't you pull back the curtains and we'll stand there for a few minutes?" she turned to ask him.

He hoped he wasn't setting himself up for getting mauled by her.

"Fine but I have not had my pills yet so don't get over-enthusiastic."

He went past her and pulled one of the curtains back, Rose going up behind him and putting her arms around his waist and her head on his back. She was tempted to pull his shirt out of the front but he might get mad at her, if he'd still had his t-shirt on, she would have done. Holding onto him, he moved to the other side, wishing she wasn't taking this so seriously. They stood a few moments, Alec turning around and putting his arms around her back and putting his head on her shoulder.

Rose couldn't remember doing that with Mickey, not that he had ever pulled the curtains back with her nor had he held her quite the way Alec was and she was starting to like it.

"You can let go now, everyone will have seen," he told her, kissing her cheek.

Rose reluctantly let go. "You should tell the hospital about last night."

"Nothing happened, I just got dizzy, I turned around too fast, that's all."

"Never mind that's all, what if next time you don't sit down in time and you fall down?"

"Then no doubt you will hear me and pick me up, you seem determined to keep me alive."

"Don't you even care?" she asked him, finally letting him go. "It's not compulsory to put up with it you know?"

"I never said that it was. Fine, I will call my new GP and tell him, want to listen?"

He headed for the stairs as Rose followed him out of the bedroom.

"Don't you go rushing downstairs either and take your pills."

"Yes mother."

Geez, Alec thought, it was almost like being married again. Rose hurried in the bathroom and got into the kitchen to hear Alec on the phone.

"What do you mean he can't take calls? Does he not talk to his patients? Yes, I will hold, I've had a change in my symptoms."

He held his hand over the speaker. "I told you this was a waste of time."

"Then just call the hospital, tell them it's urgent. Alec, seriously, the next time you may not be as lucky."

"What do you mean he'll call me back? Fine, I will call the hospital then."

He hung up and sat at the kitchen table. Rose went behind him and began rubbing his shoulders, which to him felt good though he wasn't going to admit it. He pulled her hand and kissed it again, something Rose thought was very old-fashioned about him.

"Calm down Alec or I won't drive you to work."

"Then I will call for a cab or a patrol car."

"Awkward. I'll make breakfast then go check the recordings."

After breakfast, when Rose had gone to check what had been going on opposite, Alec got the letter from the hospital out of his jacket pocket and dialled the number, hoping it wasn't one of those automated services where you had to press endless buttons on your phone. He got through to a real person and explained he was worried

about his symptoms changing.

"Well, we've had a cancellation on Friday, just now, can you come then?"

"Yes, what time?"

"0830."

He thought no wonder someone had cancelled, he'd not realised they started appointments at that time.

"Is that just a consultation?"

"Yes, we were going to call you with an appointment but we can bring it forward, since you've called us."

He dare not ask when it was going to be for, maybe sometime next year. He went into the lounge to tell Rose, who was studying the recording.

"Something interesting?" he asked, squinting at the screen over her shoulder.

"Put your specs on Alec, you don't have to impress me. That car we saw last night was there a while, someone came out of the house and was driven off."

"Make a note of it, there is sometime going on there after all. I don't like this Rose, we should hand this over."

"The chief said a week."

"We are not here to play house Rose, we have a job to do and if I think this is getting way above us, then I will get us pulled out."

"Yes Sir."

"Be serious, if they are terrorists and they are up to something, the sooner we report it as such the better. The whole town may be at risk."

"Well that woman who lives there keeps looking out of the window all the time, like she's waiting for someone."

"Well we will report that as well. I got an appointment, for Friday morning."

"Good. See, I told you that you should call them directly. What time?"

"Eight thirty in the morning," he said casually.

"Blimey, that's early. Did someone cancel?"

"Yes, can't say I blame them."

"Well, we're going, even at that time."

"No need for you to take me, I can get a cab."

"Alec, what have we just been talking about? I'm going with you, so tough."

"You are taking this very seriously, why? This is way past it being your job."

"Do I need a reason? Besides, I'm responsible for you until next Saturday."

"Yes and what then? You'll be free of your obligation."

"Then you wonder why everyone thinks you're so disagreeable."

"Are you one of them?"

Rose got up but he stopped her.

"Well, are you?"

"No but you make everyone else think you are, I defended you last Friday in front of a bunch of them."

"I can defend myself."

"They won't say anything to your face, that's why I stuck up for you."

"Then I thank you. We should be setting off. Just carry on as normal when we get there."

"What? You mean you yelling for me to fetch your tea?"

"You never seemed to object. Just tell me to get my own, that will raise you up in their esteem."

"I don't care about making friends with them, I already told you." She tried to get past him but he blocked her way.

"Don't alienate yourself on my account."

He was about to move but Rose stayed where she was, holding her arm out to stop him.

"I don't care about them."

"Then what do you care about? Keeping me from doing something stupid until I go to the hospital?"

"I'd rather do that than be friends with them, if they talk about you behind your back."

"Rose, I appreciate you defending me but you need friends."

"Not their kind. Come on then, let's get to work and never mind them. We could always wind them up."

"I am not playing along at work."

"We have to keep in character, why not have a little fun? Just go along with me."

"Then what? We go back to the way we were next week?"

"We can always break up."

"Very funny Rose."

They managed to get through the four hours, going out once on a call-out and bringing lunch back and Alec surprised her by making her a mug of tea while he was in the break area. They were about to leave when the chief came in.

"DC Tyler, DI Hardy's office now please."

Rose wondered what she had done wrong, then realized her boss probably wanted an update or was going to pull them out of the house.

"So, how is going?" Elaine asked, standing in front of Alec's desk. "I got the recordings you forwarded."

Alec wasn't aware Rose had sent them.

"Oh, so when I save them, they get sent to you?" Rose asked.

"They get sent to the surveillance team, they sent them to me. I want you to stay until the end of the week, unless more things happen than cars and people coming and going. How are the two of you getting on?"

Rose looked across the desk at Alec.

"Fine though she tends to boss me about."

"Quite right too, she can't do it at work. Keeping him out of trouble Rose?"

"It's not easy I can tell you."

"Well it's only for the rest of the week, you'll survive Alec."

"Speaking of surviving, don't you have something to tell the chief?"

Rose thought he was going to erupt as he looked back at her as if to say she should have kept quiet.

"The chief has better things to do than listen to your worries about me."

"No, I have time, if it affects your ability to work or complete your current assignment."

"No, it will not interfere. I believe what DC Tyler was trying to say was that she is worried about me."

"She is responsible for you at work and while you're sharing a

house."

Elaine left but as Rose was about to leave, Alec stopped her.

"What are you trying to do?"

"Nothing, shouldn't you have told her about your appointment?"

No, we will be back and if not, you can call and say we are going to be late. Don't do that again."

"Fine, Sir. Are you ready to leave?"

"Give me five minutes. No telling the rest of the office we are sharing a house."

"You take all the fun out of it, do you know that? Shame they didn't see you making me some tea earlier."

"Then I will try to make it a little more obvious next time."

Rose was waiting for him, sitting on the corner of her desk, the women looking over at her.

"Something wrong?" she asked loud enough for them to hear. "I have the job of driving him around, remember?"

"You never left the same time as him last week," one of the woman called over.

"Well that's what the chief wants, it saves him claiming back taxi fares or getting a patrol car to take him."

"Rather you than me."

"Well no-one's asking you, are they?"

Alec was taking his time so Rose decided she would have some fun. She got up, tapped on his door and went inside, leaving the door open.

"What's taking you so long Alec?"

"Close the door will you?"

"Aw come on Alec, how much longer do you think we can fool all of them," she nodded towards the people who cared to be looking in their direction.

"What did I tell you earlier Rose?"

Then he realised he just used her first name, for the first time in the office since she had started working there.

"You mean that we moved in together? You can't keep anything quiet around an office, you should know that."

He closed his office drawer and turned off the computer screen then got up to get his jacket, Rose lifting it off the coat hook for him and holding it on the end of her finger.

He tried to go for it but she pulled on his tie.

"Ah, ah, kiss first."

By now, people had nudged those around them and they now had an audience.

Alec realized he was not going to win this and that she was playing her part a little too well but he really wanted to get out of there and there was only one way she was going to let him, if he wanted his jacket back.

"You only had to ask nicely Rose but you do know everyone is watching us?"

"Well, that was the idea."

Alec let himself be pulled closer, taking the jacket from her and put his other arm around her shoulder and leaned down whispering, "Make this look good Tyler, you owe me."

As the office watched on, Rose felt herself melting into the short but sweet kiss that ended far too soon for her liking. He put his jacket on and allowed her in front of him, whispering in her ear.

"We need to talk when we get back."

Rose picked up her things and followed him " she couldn't agree more, they did have something to talk about because there was no way that had been for the benefit of those in the office.

## 5. Chapter 5

They drove back to the house in silence, Alec thinking he had just done something really, really stupid. What had come over him? Surely she would think he was only playing along for the benefit of those who were watching? She would surely go straight to the bedroom and pack once they got back, he wouldn't blame her, he'd not even intended doing it but she had been asking for it since Saturday.

Why had she kissed him back though? Was he going to get his face slapped when they got home? He was about to find out as Rose turned into the estate, Alec noting there was a car parked opposite again, hopefully Rose would be busy retrieving the camera footage and he might escape for a while.

"Looks like we've been missing something while we were out," Rose mused, pulling in by their rented house.

"Seems you will be forwarding more to the chief, did you know about that?"

"No, they must have missed that bit out, it won't take long to go through it, just fast-forward it, I don't have to watch four hours of nothing. You were hoping I would, weren't you?"

Alec unfastened his seatbelt but stayed where he was, grabbing her

arm as she went for the door after taking out the key.

"Afraid I will put off our little talk?"

"Nope, we need to clear the air, what came over you all of a sudden?"

"I am not discussing this out here, you go see to the recording, that is what we are here for."

"I know that Alec. Watch out, here comes the loose housewife of Broadchurch."

"Don't be rude Rose," he replied, opening the car door.

"Hello again Rose, Alec. Home early?"

"Alec's on reduced hours for now, I'm just driving him to work and back, you know and doing a bit of window shopping. I've never been here before, the harbour is nice."

"Oh, what's wrong with you then Alec, nothing serious I hope?"

He was about to reply when Rose butted in.

"Nah, just all the stress from the murder investigation and him getting some time off to spend with me, we've not seen each other since he came here, have we babe? Got a lot of catching up to do."

"Come on Rose, don't stand out here keeping our neighbour talking, remember why I am taking some time off."

"Aw, how could I forget?"

Their neighbour gave Alec a funny look as he went to Rose's side of the car and took the key and remote off her and locked the doors, then putting his arm around her. He didn't like the way she had just looked him up and down, maybe he should just admit what was wrong with him though she must be the only person in the town who didn't read last week's 'Echo'.

Rose tried to suppress a giggle as he got his house key out while trying to turn around to see if the woman had gone back inside her own house.

"Does she actually wait for us coming back?" he asked as the door opened and he took the key out of the lock.

"Maybe the chief should have got her to watch the house across the street?" Rose giggled, closing the door behind her.

"Aye, maybe. I'll go make a drink while you watch the recording then we have to talk."

"Is there something to talk about?" she asked, going to get the laptop out.

"You know there is, you getting the attention of everyone in the office."



"Well I didn't tell you to kiss me, did I?"

"What? You said you wanted a kiss before you gave me my jacket back." Then he realised he had been tricked into kissing her. "Hold on, you would have given it back to me?"

"Well duh, of course I would. "

"You said to make it look good."

"You said I owed you and to make it look good, which it was actually, to say you have a beard."

"Well I never asked you to kiss me back."

"Huh, then I won't bother next time. Weren't you making some tea?" she huffed, rewinding the recording.

"I never said I objected to doing what you asked to get my jacket back," he called behind him as he went into the kitchen. "You should not have said anything to the chief though."

"She accepted your explanation didn't she? Anyway, why hide the fact you're going to the hospital on Friday, what's the big secret? They won't do your operation then will they?"

"No, I will still have to wait," he replied, stopping in the doorway.

"How long?"

"Rose, I have just been transferred there, I do not get priority."

"Well you should. Doesn't your medical insurance cover it?"

"It was invalidated when I failed to declare there was something wrong with me."

"That's not fair."

"Well it was renewed shortly after I discovered what was wrong with me, it is entirely my own fault."

"Come over and look at this."

"Not another one of your tricks to get me to kiss you again is it?" he asked nervously as he crossed to where she was sitting.

"Wouldn't you just like it to be, you didn't need much of an excuse did you?"

"I am not going to apologize, you were just as much to blame. Why did you call me over here?"

She had stopped as the recording showed three men get out of a car, one remaining in the driver's seat.

"That's the car that was there when we just came in," Alec declared

as he went to the window.

"Don't pull the net curtain over, someone may have gone back to it."

"Well there was no-one there when passed," he told her as he tried to get his specs out of his shirt pocket and resisting pulling back the net.

Rose got up and went up behind him.

"I have an idea, come upstairs," she suggested, grabbing his arm.

"What are you up to?" he asked as he followed her to the stairs.

"You'll find out, you want to see don't you?"

"That all depends on what your plan is."

They went upstairs and into the bedroom, Rose going to the window.

"Well don't stand all the way over there."

"Tell me what your plan is first," he hesitated, still in the relative safety of the doorway.

She walked back towards him.

"It won't work with me just standing there."

She took his hand and pulled him to the window, in full view of the street below then went for his tie.

"First, that has to come off."

"Is that all? Don't pull it undone," he instructed as she loosened it and undid another button at the top.

She smiled and pulled it over his head, tossing it away but wasn't finished yet. Where his shirt was open at the neck, she began kissing it, Alec trying not to squirm as her lips felt soft just below his left ear.

"Done are you?" he hoped as he reached for the top button of her blue short sleeved blouse she wore for work.

She stopped what she was doing and as he moved his hand away, she pulled it back.

"Ah, not so fast Alec, no, we're not done yet."

She kept her fingers on his, making him open another two buttons of hers until he could see her low cut black bra, not that his eyes were actually looking at her bra for more than a second as they then rested on her cleavage.

Satisfied, she went for his shirt buttons, Alec stunned and being

unable to stop her, even though he knew he should really but this was her idea of surveillance, he didn't want to spoil her illusion and the view was pleasant enough. She got down to the last but one button and pulled the shirt out, resting her hands on his chest.

"What now?" he dared to ask, knowing he was going to regret being so dumb that he knew what was going to happen but wanted her to confirm it first.

She put her arms around his shoulders, pulling the shirt down over them, making him put his arms around her waist but not before he decided he was going to take this over, if she wanted to play games with him. With one hand on her waist, he fumbled with another two of her buttons, getting him an even better view, then he pulled her close and began kissing her neck.

"Seen anything?" she asked him, not believing how good it felt and knowing she had missed having a boyfriend, well one who would pay her this much attention and her boss was not her boyfriend, more like he would never be her boyfriend but she could live in hope.

"Oh, I've seen plenty, you made sure I did."

Rose looked up. "I meant outside you plum."

"Oh, you should have made that clear."

"Concentrate then."

"What do you think I am doing?" he asked as he got lower down towards her collarbone.

"Not that kind of concentrating, here, turn around, let me see."

As they changed places, he pulled the blouse over her shoulders.

"Now who's the one taking this seriously? No, there's no-one in that car, whoever it was must have gone inside with the others. Ouch!"

"Sorry," he said, as he kissed the part he had just bitten.

"I should slap you silly right now."

"Be my guest, I probably deserve it but if you are going to, I may as well finish what I started."

"No you don't, it's my turn."

He looked up and saw her hazel eyes meant business.

"Maybe we should go and check the rest of the recording?" he asked as Rose reached up to kiss his shoulder.

"What? Oh, I never thought of that."

"Seriously? You dragged me up here under false pretences then? You mean to say you never checked the end, just as we got back?"

"Well I didn't get that far, did I?" she asked him, kissing her way down towards his chest.

"Rose, I thought you had just gone back to show me that bit."

"Oops, sorry."

He tried to pull her away as she was about to start kissing her way across his chest. If she was going to start that, he wasn't going to let her be the only one to have that pleasure, he planned on doing the same to her and since she was still wearing her black lacy bra, well that was just plain unfair.

"You are sorry?"

"Are you mad at me Alec?" she asked, staring into his brown eyes.

"I have every right to be, you should have checked to the end."

"Well you never asked me if I had, did you?"

"Do I have to supervise you?"

"You know this is my first surveillance assignment?"

"Stop using that as an excuse."

"Do you want me to fasten your shirt back?" she smiled, fingering one of the shirt buttons with one hand and the other still on his chest.

He looked down at more of her cleavage and knew he was doomed. He held her hand in place for a few seconds then looked like he was going to back away.

"Close the curtains and I'll tell you," he just replied, placing a kiss just above her bra.

She got out of his grasp and grabbed one of the curtains, Alec going for her waist and kissing her neck from behind and reaching out with his other arm to grab the other curtain. They had hardly got them closed when their lips met and he went behind her back to unclasp her bra.

"Alec, I thought we were going to talk about this?"

"Are you protesting now?" he asked, the strap still between his fingers.

"Well not exactly, what made you change your mind?"

"I haven't changed it entirely, it's still not that good an idea to get involved. Besides, what happens if I am told on Friday that I'm not suitable for surgery?"

"What? Why would they say that? What aren't you telling me?"

He fumbled with her clasp and fastened it again, putting his hands on her shoulders and looking serious.

"Because the last time I was told I may not even survive an operation."

Rose staggered backwards and he caught her, sitting her on the bed.

"You should have told me Alec."

"Why? So you would feel sorry for me?"

"Don't you think I deserved to know, being your partner? I'm supposed to look after you."

"Yes, you are but only for a week then you go back to your boarding house and I go back to the hotel. If they don't tell me on Friday it's all over for me, then I'll probably make my way back towards Sandbrook and tell my daughter."

Rose remained quiet, not even bothering her blouse was still mostly unbuttoned.

"So you went along with this, thinking it was your last assignment?" she managed to ask.

"Maybe. Once I'm seen by the consultant, they will send a report to the CMO, he won't let me stay on. I just got a two week reprieve."

"It's all my fault then, insisting you call the hospital, isn't it?"

"No, not entirely, I agreed to call them. They were in the process of sending me an appointment though it may have been too late. I am getting worse Rose, I can tell. I should have realised the other week, before I collapsed chasing Joe Miller that night. I should have known when Becca Fisher called for an ambulance when I collapsed in the hotel bathroom."

"I'm so sorry Alec, I've just made things worse for you. I'd better get dressed and I'm sorry for playing these stupid flirting games with you."

"I knew you were flirting with me."

"Yeah, I bet you did."

He took her hand and placed it on his heart, Rose not even flinching but feeling it wasn't right.

"How can you live like this?"

"I've had to. Now you know why I was in no hurry to chase up hospital appointments. Now I'll know for definite one way or the other on Friday morning, if I'll get sent for surgery or if they say there is nothing that can be done for me."

Rose looked at him and Alec saw she was crying.

"Don't cry Rose, at least I've had these few days, you fussing and

bothering over me, no-one has done that before."

"Your ex wife never knew, did she?"

"No, not until recently when it all came out. Maybe she would have stayed had she known but there again, it may have made no difference either."

He put his arm around her and kissed her forehead, her hand remaining where it was.

"Want to fasten my shirt buttons for me?" he asked, trying to lighten the mood.

Rose tried to smile back, reaching for the bottom one.

"Only if you fasten my blouse."

"Deal."

They went back downstairs and Rose finished watching the recording, seeing the man in the car get out and going into the house then them all leaving after they had stopped playing around in the window. Alec went to rest on the sofa and when Rose had put the laundry on, she sat on the edge of the sofa, trying to move his feet. He got the hint and she lay next to him, Alec putting his arm around her and Rose daring to kiss him again.

"No unbuttoning my shirt again, not unless you want the same."

"I never objected did I?"

"No, you didn't."

"It was kinda nice, wasn't it?"

He put his hand on her cheek and pulled her towards him gently. They shared a few short, sweet kisses then Alec moved until Rose could reach him properly and the kisses deepened one by one.

"I was wondering what it was like to kiss my boss," Rose admitted.

"Well, I hope you were not too disappointed but we can't make anything of this Rose, you know that."

"Why can't we? You go to the hospital on Friday and you tell them you want to go ahead."

"Then what? I may not come around from the surgery."

"What happens if you don't have it? Do you sit around moping in some hotel room? Well I'm not gonna let you do that. Your daughter can come down here and visit you, you come and live with me and I'll take care of you but only if they say it's too risky for you to go ahead. If they say it's 50/50 or even less, then you have to at least try."

"I'll agree on one condition."

He pulled her for another kiss, putting his hand on her blouse and then up the front, fingering her bra.

"Mmm, what condition is that then?"

"You stay with me until I go for it, still keep me for doing anything stupid. Agreed?"

"Yeah, goes without saying, DI Grumpy."

He shuffled her around, unbuttoned her blouse as she did his shirt buttons then he reached back and unclasped her bra again.

"Hope you're gonna finish the job this time?" she teased, poking her tongue out of the corner of her mouth.

"What do you take me for Tyler? I always finish the job," he replied as he pulled the offending article of clothing away and revealed her soft pink breasts.

He leaned down and placed a kiss on one then the other as Rose pulled his shirt over his shoulders.

"I hope you are going to finish what you started as well?"

Rose eventually went to make something to eat after going to get changed into a vest top and a t-shirt then they curled up on the sofa to watch a film until Alec said he felt tired.

"Just hang on two minutes and I'll come up with you."

"Sure, I guess I learned my lesson. Rose, what I said earlier, I did not mean to upset you."

"I needed to know Alec, how could you not bother telling me?"

"It was personal and I did not know we were going to get involved, did I?"

"So you're gonna fight this then?"

As he tried to get up, he kissed her again.

"What do you think Rose?"

"Why don't you take the next few days off, they can manage without you."

"That's just it Rose, there is no senior officer though they will have to get one, should I either not survive or get thrown out for good. I will not be able to work after Friday anyway."

"Then stay off, we are on assignment and the CS said we didn't have to go in. They can call you if they need to."

"Well ok then, you are very persuasive. I guess there will be no pretending at the window tonight then?"

Rose giggled.

"What?" he asked, lifting her t-shirt and kissing her tummy.

"We left the curtains pulled over."

Alec smiled. "Yes, someone was in a hurry to get my shirt off."

"Yeah and someone was trying to get my bra off."

"Well I regret upsetting you that I never finished."

"You more than made up for it Alec. Come on, I'm not letting you out of my sight for longer than necessary."

"Well I am still not leaving the bathroom door open."

Rose made sure the house was locked up and the laptop was hidden away in a cupboard then went upstairs, Alec just coming out of the bathroom.

"You can make a big difference Rose, now I know you really do care."

"I cared about you from the start, even before the chief put us on this assignment."

"You were not bothered what everyone would think?" he asked as she settled on him, going to kiss his chest.

"Not really, I'm a bit of a rebel."

End  
file.